

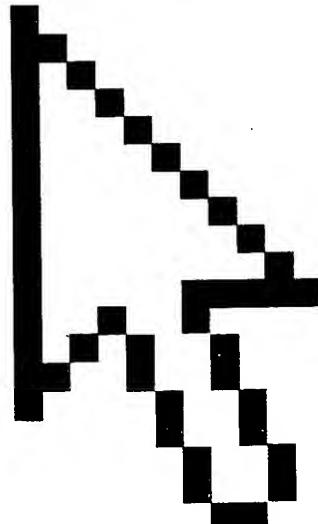
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Microsoft

Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition



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PUBLISHED BY
Microsoft Press
A Division of Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, Washington 98052-6399

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Microsoft Computer Dictionary.--5th ed.

p. cm.
ISBN 0-7356-1495-4
1. Computers--Dictionaries. 2. Microcomputers--Dictionaries.

AQ76.5. M52267 2002
004'.03--dc21

200219714

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 QWT 7 6 5 4 3 2

Distributed in Canada by H.B. Fenn and Company Ltd.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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compaction

compaction *n.* The process of gathering and packing the currently allocated regions of memory or auxiliary storage into as small a space as possible, so as to create as much continuous free space as possible. *Compare dispersion, file fragmentation (definition 1).*

compact model *n.* A memory model of the Intel 80x86 processor family. The compact model allows only 64 kilobytes (KB) for the code of a program but up to 1 megabyte (MB) for the program's data. *See also memory model.*

CompactPCI *n.* An open bus specification for industrial computing needs developed by the PCI Industrial Computer Manufacturers Group (PICMG). CompactPCI is based on the desktop-computing PCI bus but differs in a number of respects, including a pin-and-socket connector and a design that allows for front loading and removal of cards. CompactPCI is intended for applications such as industrial automation, military systems, and real-time data acquisition. It is suitable for high-speed communications devices, such as routers, and allows for hot-plugging. *See also hot plugging, PCI local bus.*

comparator *n.* A device for comparing two items to determine whether they are equal. In electronics, for example, a comparator is a circuit that compares two input voltages and indicates which is higher.

compare *vb.* To check two items, such as words, files, or numeric values, so as to determine whether they are the same or different. In a program, the outcome of a compare operation often determines which of two or more actions is taken next.

comparison criteria *n.* A set of search conditions that is used to find data. Comparison criteria can be a series of characters that you want to match, such as "Northwind Traders", or an expression, such as ">300".

compatibility *n.* 1. The degree to which a computer, an attached device, a data file, or a program can work with or understand the same commands, formats, or language as another. True compatibility means that any operational differences are invisible to people and programs alike. 2. The extent to which two machines can work in harmony. Compatibility (or the lack thereof) between two machines indicates whether, and to what degree, the computers can communicate, share data, or run the same programs. For example, an Apple Macintosh and an IBM PC are generally incompatible because they cannot communicate freely or share data without the aid of hardware and/or software that functions as an intermediary or a con-

verter. 3. The extent to which a piece of hardware conforms to an accepted standard (for example, IBM-compatible or Hayes-compatible). In this sense, compatibility means that the hardware ideally operates in all respects like the standard on which it is based. 4. In reference to software, harmony on a task-oriented level among computers and computer programs. Computers deemed software-compatible are those that can run programs originally designed for other makes or models. Software compatibility also refers to the extent to which programs can work together and share data. In another area, totally different programs, such as a word processor and a drawing program, are compatible with one another if each can incorporate images or files created using the other. All types of software compatibility become increasingly important as computer communications, networks, and program-to-program file transfers become near-essential aspects of microcomputer operation. *See also downward compatibility, upward-compatible.*

compatibility box *n.* *See DOS box (definition 1).*

compatibility mode *n.* A mode in which hardware or software in one system supports operations of software from another system. The term often refers to the ability of advanced operating systems designed for Intel microprocessors (for example, OS/2 and Windows NT) to run MS-DOS software or to the ability of some UNIX workstations and of some Apple Macintosh systems to run MS-DOS software.

Competitive Local Exchange Carrier *n.* *See CLEC.*

compile *vb.* To translate all the source code of a program from a high-level language into object code prior to execution of the program. Object code is executable machine code or a variation of machine code. More generally, *compiling* is sometimes used to describe translating any high-level symbolic description into a lower-level symbolic or machine-readable format. A program that performs this task is known as a *compiler*. *See also compiler (definition 2), compile time, high-level language, machine code, source code. Compare interpret.*

compile-and-go *adj.* Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a development environment that automatically runs a program after compiling it. *See also compile, execute.*

compiled Basic *n.* Any version of Basic that is translated into machine code prior to execution by a compiler. Basic has traditionally been an interpreted language (translated and executed statement by statement); because compiled

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